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Somers plant cleanup may take 50 years

A new estimate from the Environmental Protection Agency released last week said the cleanup of the former Burlington Northern tie plant at Somers may take up to 50 years. Tests conducted at the site last summer showed the soils at the site are so tight that the hot-water injection treatment recommended by an earlier agreement between EPA and BN will take five times longer than previously estimated. The Somers plant for 85 years treated railroad ties. Pollutants from the plant contaminated the area and the groundwater under the area. Some of the chemicals used to treat the ties have been shown to cause cancer. Last summer some of the chemicals from the site showed up in a Somers municipal water well. The EPA-BN agreement allowed for excavation of some of the contaminated soil for treatment above ground. New EPA recommendations call for triple the original amount of soil to be excavated. An informational meeting is scheduled by EPA for 7 p.m. Thursday at the Somers Central School Gymnasium.


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